

Signs of Preterm Labor

If you have any of the following symptoms, let the person in charge of the shelter know immediately and call your health care provider:

- Contractions every 10 minutes or more often
- Leaking fluid or bleeding from your vagina
- The feeling that your baby is pushing down
- Low, dull backache
- Cramps that feel like your period
- Abdominal cramps with or without diarrhea

These could be signs of preterm labor.

Resources:

- An emergency situation can cause a great deal of stress for a family. If you are concerned about your relationship and your safety, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1.800.799.SAFE (7233)**
- Organization of Teratology Information Specialists (OTIS) offers free telephone counseling to women worried about toxic exposures weekdays 8am-8pm Central Time at **1.886.626.6847**

The March of Dimes is a national voluntary health agency whose mission is to improve the health of babies by preventing birth defects, premature birth, and infant mortality.

Information for this brochure was gathered from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention "Hurricane Tips: Pregnant Women" and Florida WIC "WIC FACTS Newsletter: Be Prepared at All Times".

Prepare for Disasters: Special Information for Pregnant Women

Start with following all directions given by the state during an emergency.

Here are some special things to consider.

The needs of a pregnant woman during a disaster or crisis are unique.



Before:

Checklist:

- Call your physician: communicate with your health provider's office to let them know where you will be; if you plan to leave town bring a copy of your medical records, immunizations and current medications
- Discuss concerns and delivery plans with your health care provider.
- If you have a case manager or participate in a program such as Healthy Start or Nurse Family Partnership, let your care coordinator know where you are going and a phone number to contact you.
- If you have a high-risk pregnancy or you are close to delivery, check with your health care provider to determine the safest option for you.

During:

- Bring any medications you are currently taking, including your prenatal vitamins and your prescriptions.
- Keep a copy of your prenatal medical records with you and contact information for your health care provider in case you have to visit another provider.
- If you are driving, be sure to stop to get out and walk every 1-2 hours.
- Wear comfortable shoes and pack some snacks.
- Remember that maternity clothes may not be available if you evacuate. Pack extra clothes for yourself, including undergarments.

Important Telephone Numbers:

Health Care Provider

Case Manager

Hospital

After:

- Being pregnant is a stressful time. Find someone to talk to a few times a day. The fact that you have someone to talk to can be helpful all by itself.
- Drink 8 glasses (8 ounces servings) of water a day.
- Eat several times throughout the day, and try to choose foods that are high in protein and low in fat.
- Take time to lie down and put your feet up a few times a day. You and your baby need rest often and avoid getting overheated.
- Find a quiet spot to clear your mind of worries and take deep breaths from your belly.
- Know the signs of labor and preterm labor. See back for more information.
- If your health care provider's office is closed, or if you have had to evacuate, you can call a local hospital or parish health unit to get more information about prenatal care and locations of hospitals.